

LOUISIANA

Odd Company

Big Jim Garrison was as good as his word. The towering (6 ft. 6 in.) district attorney of New Orleans had promised some arrests in his sensational crusade to unmask a conspiracy to assassinate John F. Kennedy, and last week, sure enough, he made an arrest. Clay Shaw, 54, former managing director of New Orleans' International Trade Mart and a well-known civic leader, was taken into custody after five hours of nonstop questioning. "There was an agreement and combination," said Garrison's office, among Shaw, Lee Harvey Oswald and others "to kill John F. Kennedy." There it was—the first formal allegation that someone besides Oswald was involved in the President's murder.

A Black Gown. Was Garrison onto something? It was all but impossible to tell. His sleuths, like small boys over-

turning a rock in a muddy field, have uncovered all manner of seamy, unsavory creatures with curious links to Oswald. Under investigation are, among others, pro-Castro leftists, anti-Castro Cubans and a motley assortment of beatniks, homosexuals and psychopaths of various stripes. Their haunts ranged from "gay" coffee shops and bars in New Orleans' French Quarter to shadowy back streets in the Cuban sections of Dallas and Miami.

At least a dozen theories are current in New Orleans—practically every boot-black and cabbie seems to have several. One of the favorites is that Fidel Castro, having unearthed a CIA plot to assassinate him, sent four teams of killers to the U.S.—one of them including Oswald—to get Kennedy in retaliation. Another, less incredible, conjecture holds that Shaw and others merely planted the seed of the assassination idea in Oswald; such encouragement would be enough to justify conspiracy charges under Louisiana law.

Garrison insists that he has a witness to a number of 1963 meetings involving Shaw, Oswald and David Ferrie, a former airline pilot who died two weeks ago of natural causes. When police searched Ferrie's cluttered apartment, they filled 14 cartons with his effects, including a "Dear Al" letter to a boy friend ("I offered you love and the best I could; all I got in return, in the end, was a kick in the teeth"), but Garrison did not say whether he had unearthed any clues to the assassination. When police searched Shaw's home, among the items they discovered, according to an official inventory, were "one black hood and cape," "chain," "whips," "black gown" and "black net-type hat." Again, Garrison did not say whether there was anything to bolster his case.

Want to Bet? What did it all have to do with the assassination? Garrison contended that Shaw, who claims that he is in-

nocent, used the alias of Clay Bertrand, a name that had been introduced into the Warren Commission report by Louisiana Attorney Dean Andrews Jr. Andrews, who frequently defends accused homosexuals, said "Bertrand" called him on the afternoon of the assassination and asked him to defend Oswald. While the FBI says that Andrews admitted he made the whole thing up, he insists that the story is true—but he does not say that Shaw and "Bertrand" are the same person. Garrison does.

That still left the D.A. a long way from establishing anything except that Oswald kept some odd company during his 1963 stay in New Orleans. Still, Garrison remains certain that he has something big. "I have no doubt about the case," he said. "There will be more arrests, and they will hold up. If you bet

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